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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2519

Aug. 16, 1991

WETLANDS POLICY -- Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** says the revised wetlands policy proposal is "good news" for America's farmers. "This proposal takes a common sense approach to balancing the needs of farmers and the environment," Madigan says. "A significant point is the fact that under the proposed revisions, the burden of proof will be on the government to show that the land area is actually a wetland, rather than for the farmer to have to prove that it isn't a wetland." **Contact:** **Roger Runningen** (202) 447-4623.

KUWAIT OFFERS EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES -- Kuwait's demand for ag imports remains strong in the wake of the Gulf War. Renewed trade offers U.S. exporters the chance to boost shipments of a variety of products. "It now appears that a strong import recovery will occur, with 1991 agricultural imports rebounding from the low level of late 1990," says USDA Economist **John Parker**. "By late 1991, substantial stock rebuilding should begin, and efforts will be under way to establish new poultry farms and dairies, possibly in the far north near the Iraqi border, away from the problems left by the war in the south." **Contact:** **John Parker** (202) 219-0680.

BEETLEDOOM -- A lady beetle & a smaller beetle, both from Asia, may become the first major natural controls for scale pests of ornamental trees & bushes, **John J. Drea**, a USDA entomologist says. "Scale insects affix themselves to plants with their needle-like mouthparts," Drea says. "They literally milk the plant dry of sap." Field studies of the two Asian beetles over the last eight years have shown the beetles took hold and quickly all but eliminated the scale from many test plots. **Contact:** **John J. Drea** (301) 344-1791.

LOW-CAL HAMBURGERS -- A new ground beef product developed by scientists at the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station at Auburn University has less than 10 percent fat & 40 to 50 percent fewer calories than traditional ground beef. Called "AU Lean," the product first reached the commercial market as the McLean Delux, a low-fat hamburger being marketed nationally by McDonald's. Other restaurant companies are also considering the AU Lean formulation & it is one of four low-fat ground beef products being evaluated in a USDA pilot study for possible use in the National School Lunch Program. **Contact:** **Dale Huffman** (205) 844-1517.

CHINA CUTS IMPORTS -- Due to China's abundant harvest, U.S. exports of wheat & corn to that country are expected to fall sharply this year. But U.S. exports of cotton will remain steady, & cattle hides will increase. China is enjoying a rich harvest, says USDA Economist **Francis Tuan**, part of a long-time trend that began with ag reform in 1979. Production leveled off after 1984, but rose again in 1989 & expanded even further in 1990. "For the past 40 years, China's goal has been food self-sufficiency," says Tuan. **Contact:** **Francis Tuan** (202) 219-0621.

SPICING UP POTATO STORAGE -- Natural compounds from spices such as cinnamon will stop potatoes from sprouting, USDA scientists have found. Such sprouting inhibitors could prevent millions of dollars of potatoes from going to waste. "When potatoes begin to sprout, all sorts of things happen," says USDA Plant Physiologist Steven F. Vaughn. Sprouting tubers soften & lose weight and change much of their starch into sugars. **Contact: Steven F. Vaughn (309) 685-4011.**

PAPAYA HOT WATER TREATMENT OUT -- USDA is proposing to disallow a "double hot-water dip" as an approved quarantine treatment for Hawaiian papayas. "The hot water treatment is effective when properly done, but it is too complex to be practical," says James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service. Glosser says on two occasions, fruit fly larvae were found in treated papayas. He also says there are good alternative treatments available. **Contact: Caree Vander Linden (301) 436-7799.**

SLUDGE AS FERTILIZER -- After five years of applying sludge to dryland winter wheat, a research team coordinated by scientists at land-grant universities has found that waste materials can be used as beneficial fertilizers on croplands without fear of hazardous heavy metal buildup. The team of 30 scientists found not only was there no heavy metal buildup, but also that nutrients found in the sludge had tremendous benefits for the crops. **Contact: Gary Lee (208) 885-7173.**

NO FAT DESSERTS -- For those who need to restrict their fat & cholesterol, some of the new "no fat," "no cholesterol," dessert products are very acceptable alternatives. They contain different types of carbohydrates, starches & non-fat dry milk, which replaces shortening. They mimic the taste & texture of fat. They don't have nearly as many calories as fat & they don't have adverse effects on blood cholesterol. They do, however, still contain sugar. **Contact: Mark Kantor (301) 405-1018.**

JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN AG -- Educators predict an upward trend in job opportunities nationwide for ag students in the 1990s. "There will be more jobs available than students to fill them," says Bobby Rankin, head of the animal & range sciences department at New Mexico State University. Rankin and others say replacement of an aging workforce, development of new food products & a new concern for the environment are making it a sellers' market for ag grads. **Contact: Lowell Catlett (505) 646-2504.**

CRAWFORD RESIGNS -- Lester M. Crawford has resigned as administrator of USDA's Food Safety & Inspection Service, effective Aug. 31. Crawford will become executive vice president for scientific affairs at the National Food Processors Association in Washington, D.C. **Contact: Jim Greene (202) 382-0314.**

<p><i>Editor: Marci Hilt Phone: (202) 447-6445</i></p>
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FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

- AGRICULTURE USA #1784** -- Dairy producers are facing low milk prices. On this edition of **Agriculture USA**, Brenda Curtis reports on the current state of the dairy industry & the outlook for the future. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)
- CONSUMER TIME #1266** -- Watering your lawn; sports, heat & fluids; back-to-school lunches; new anti-cancer components in the food you eat; more about ice cream. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)
- AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1774** -- USDA News Highlights; 1991 signup results; a new crop/price prediction; a dairy shakedown; controlling the Africanized bee. (Weekly reel of news features.)
- NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1431** -- Diet & blood pressure; trim that fat; facts about fats; new meat tests; future fungicide test. (Weekly reel of news features.)
- UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Mon., Aug. 26, wheat outlook; Tues., Aug. 27, dairy yearbook, crop/weather update; Wed., Aug. 28, cotton/wool yearbook; Thurs., Aug. 29, export outlook, world tobacco situation; Fri., Aug. 30, ag prices; Tues., Sept. 3, horticultural exports; Wed., Sept. 4, crop/weather update; Thurs., Sept. 5, western Europe outlook. (These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.)
- DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.**
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE
(Week of Aug. 15, 17 & 19, 1991)

- FEATURES** -- Pat O'Leary reports on farmers markets; Mike Thomas, University of Missouri, takes a look at water quality; Artis Ford, Mississippi State University, reports on blueberry crops.
- ACTUALITIES** -- USDA Meteorologist Norton Strommen on weather & crops; USDA World Board Chair Jim Donald on crop production estimates; Gary Havilland, with USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, on farming techniques in Albania.
- UPCOMING FEATURES** -- DeBoria Janifer reports on exercise & the elderly; Pat O'Leary reports on USDA plant explorers; Lynn Wyvill reports on low maintenance gardening.
- EVERY OTHER WEEK** -- **Agriculture Update**, five minutes of USDA farm program info, in news desk format with B-Roll footage.

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THURSDAY7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT
SATURDAY10 - 10:45 a.m., EDT
MONDAY8 - 8:45 a.m., EDT

OFFMIKE

TWO-BEAN PODS...are common for soybean plants that have developed pods, says **Gary Kinnett** (WIAI, Danville, Ill.). Drought has lowered yield estimates to 5-10 bushels per acre; corn at 45 bushels. Many producers in the area have put the disc to sweetcorn & popcorn. Gary says conditions are a little less severe in the southern half of the state. Outlook is not good for rain in August.

COTTON PROSPECTS...have improved in Texas, says **Roddy Peeples** (VSA Radio Network, San Angelo), thanks to timely rain. Crop is looking good, but the crop is not expected to top last year's. Cattle weights, not numbers, are further pressuring lower prices, Roddy says. The drop was overdue & deeper than expected.

LOW PRICES...for corn prompted producers to hold on to feeder cattle hoping for price improvement, says **Mike LePorte** (KRVN, Lexington, Neb.), but increased marketed weights are dropping prices. It will take a while for the situation to work through.

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TOBACCO CROP...is one of the best in years, says **Ken Tanner** (WRAL-TV/Tobacco Radio Net, Raleigh, N.C.). Main threat is from too much water in the root system which can ripen the plant early & diminish quality. Cotton acreage in the state is more than double last year. With the successful eradication of boll weevil in North Carolina, the crop is looking good, prompting more cotton gins to open for business. Peanuts & soybeans are doing well.

APPLE PRODUCERS...in Washington state are saying the 1991 crop is the second largest on record, says **Wey Simpson** (KAQQ, Spokane). Wey says it reflects increased acreage, but that both size & quality are down. Spring wheat harvest is underway two weeks late due to wetness this spring.

CONGRATULATIONS...to **Kelly Lenz** (WIBW/Kansas Ag Network, Topeka). Nice article in the July 1991 issue of MID-AM REPORTER Magazine on him and his comments about the changing role of farm broadcasting.

Vic Powell
VIC POWELL

Chief, Radio & TV Division